



NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION OFFICE

Baybee Hufana-Ablan, Executive Secretary

POWERS, DUTIES AND FUNCTIONS

The implementation of the Neighborhood Board system began in 1972, when Honolulu voters approved a revision to the Revised City Charter, Article XIV, which called for the formation of a nine-member Neighborhood Commission to develop a Neighborhood Plan to assist in implementing the formation and operation of elected neighborhood boards on Oahu. The purpose is to provide a mechanism to increase and assure resident participation in the process of government decision-making. Administrative and technical staff provided through the Neighborhood Commission Office supports the mandated functions of the Neighborhood Commission and the neighborhood boards.

HIGHLIGHTS

Neighborhood Commission Office

Neighborhood Commission Adds Kapolei Office – On May 16, 2005, nine of 16 staff members moved into a new office on the third floor of Kapolei Hale. The co-location of the staff office, which is right next door to Mayor Mufi Hannemann's Kapolei office, was not only to ensure that the Leeward and Central neighborhood boards had equal access to Neighborhood Commission staff, but also to reaffirm the Mayor's commitment to fully utilize Kapolei Hale and encourage private sector to realize the planned second city of Kapolei is a viable alternate location for offices.

Executive Secretary Attends Neighborhood Board Meetings In FY 2005 – During the last five months of FY 2005, newly appointed Executive Secretary Baybee Hufana-Ablan, was able to visit and introduce herself to 26 of the 32 neighborhood boards. It is her objective to visit the remaining six boards (Aiea, Ala Moana, Kalihi Valley, Kaneohe, Koolauloa, and Liliha) before year end.

2005 Neighborhood Board Elections – During the 2005 Neighborhood Board Elections, 543 candidates filed applications to run for the 444 board seats on our 32 boards. Of this total, two candidates filed complaints regarding the election results.

Executive Secretary Meets with Neighborhood Board Chairs – For the first time ever, the Executive Secretary hosted a meeting on April 28, 2005, for chairs of the 32 neighborhood boards. Ideas and concerns by the 21 chairs attending the meeting were shared with Executive Secretary Baybee Hufana-Ablan as well as Managing Director, Jeff Coelho, who fielded questions from the board chairs. She has scheduled another meeting with board chairs and the Commission chair in September 2005.

Sunshine Law Training – With the help of the Managing Director's Office and the State's Office of Information Practices, two sunshine law (open meetings) training sessions were conducted for neighborhood board members and commissioners of City agencies on May 14 and June 28, 2005.

Neighborhood Commission

Neighborhood Plan – During fiscal year 2005, the Neighborhood Commission's Neighborhood Plan Committee continued its comprehensive review process of the 1998 Edition of the Neighborhood Plan. Plans are to schedule and hold public hearings for discussion of the proposed amendments by the end of 2005.

Neighborhood Board Initiative Petition – The commission denied an amendment proposal for the purpose of considering changes to the organizational structure of the McCully/ Moiliili Neighborhood Board No. 8. It asked the board to review three alternate proposals which would be more equitable for Subdistrict 3.

Attendance at Neighborhood Board Meetings – Commission members have continued to attend monthly neighborhood board meetings to observe and to better understand the needs of neighborhood boards.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION OFFICE

With positive direction from the Managing Director and cooperation from Corporation Counsel in reviewing numerous issues with legal implications, the Neighborhood Commission office provided administrative and technical support services to the Neighborhood Commission and the neighborhood boards to assist in facilitating their City Charter-mandated functions to increase and assure effective citizen participation in the decisions of government. These activities have been accomplished

The office operations are divided into two major and interdependent sections to strengthen operations and services: 1) Community and Elections Services which supports 32 neighborhood boards and the conduct of their biennial elections, and 2) Administrative and Office Services, which administratively services the commission and the boards, and provides communication and training services as well as housekeeping and office services. The duties and accomplishments of the office operations are expanded upon in the sections following.

Neighborhood Commission Office Accomplishments

Community and Election Services Section

Neighborhood Board Field Services – Accomplishments of our field staff included: 1) serving as the primary liaison between the boards, the Neighborhood Commission, and the City, State and Federal governments,

2) providing documentation of board activities by producing and filing of meeting agendas, attending, recording and distribution of meeting minutes, and completing the written and oral requests generated by official board action, 3) providing technical information on proper meeting procedures, City policies and program, and 4) assisting in producing and distributing publicity materials to enhance two-way communication with neighborhood residents.

Meetings attended and recorded 385

Monthly sets of minutes and agendas processed/mailed 5,819

Annual attendance at board meetings 7,320

Neighborhood Board Election Services – Our staff participation for the 2005 board elections process began in late 2004 with writing and producing public service announcements and posters to promote awareness of Neighborhood Boards and the upcoming election. We had 543 candidates file applications to run for the 444 board seats on our 32 boards.



The May 14, 2005, investiture ceremony planned by Election Services staff, represented the culmination of the board elections. Mayor Mufi Hannemann shared an inspiring message with board members and Council Chair Donovan Dela Cruz, and Executive Secretary, Baybee Hufana-Ablan, thanked board members for their commitment to their communities. Councilmembers Ann Kobayashi and Gary Okino, Neighborhood Boards Commissioners, as well as families and friends of board members, also came to honor our dedicated community volunteers. The ceremony was followed by a lunch hosted by the Neighborhood Commission Office staff.

Administrative and Office Services Activities – The administrative staff coordinated and serviced all regular and special meetings of the Neighborhood Commission. Essential and substantial staff support and technical assistance was provided to the commission in complaint hearings, and in the conduct of public hearings relating to the neighborhood boards' amendments to their Initiative Petitions to receive testimony and public input.

Section staff coordinated the fiscal expenditures for each neighborhood board through its centralized purchasing and accounting functions. Individual monthly statements were prepared for all 32 neighborhood boards to apprise each board about the status of its operational, publicity and refreshment appropriations. In addition to assisting with the preparation of the commission's annual operating budget, this section services the nine-member commission and handles all fiscal, personnel and property inventory matters.

Our administrative staff also supports the Mayor's Representative Program working with the Managing Director's Office. We clarify with the Mayor's representatives all the questions and concerns related to them by board members and residents at each neighborhood board meeting. The questions and concerns are then forwarded to appropriate departments, and monitored to assure responses are received by the departments in time for the Mayor's representatives to discuss at the following board meeting.

Training and Educational Programs – Training and educational programs serve a vital function in providing basic skills and essential technical information to assist board members to effectively perform their tasks.

In October 2003, Council-initiated Ordinance 03-30 amended Chapter 3 of the Revised Ordinances of Honolulu by adding a new Article 12, requiring sunshine law training for elected neighborhood board members. The ordinance requires that *"any board member whose date of taking office is after July 1, 2004 shall participate in the sunshine law training program within three months from the date of taking office."* Sunshine law training was neither planned nor conducted until the new administration was in place. With the help of the Managing Director's office and the State's Office of Information Practices, two sunshine law training sessions were conducted for neighborhood board members and commissioners of City agencies on May 14 and June 28, 2005. Further, the Office of the Corporation Counsel has committed to assist the Neighborhood Commission Office in conducting quarterly sunshine law training, with the first one planned for August 29, 2005.

Other board training workshops conducted to further enhance the role of Neighborhood Board members, included "How To Make Your Meeting Work," three workshops on "Orientation for Board Members," and a session on "Parliamentary Procedures."

- A workshop on "How To Make Your Meeting Work" was conducted by the Neighborhood Commission in July 2004 at Kapolei Hale. The workshop focused on parliamentary procedures, how they apply to neighborhood boards, tools on how to make meeting time productive and tips for chairs and board members.



- Two Sunshine Law (open meetings law) training sessions were held on May 14 and June 28, 2005. The sessions, conducted by Les Kondo of the State Office of Information Planning, were to educate the 253 board and commission members in attendance on the intent of the open government law to protect the people's right to know and allow public participation.
- Two sessions of "Orientation for Board Members" were held on May 14 and June 15, 2005. The presentations focused on information related to the purpose and role of the neighborhood board, elections, boundaries, use of the board's budget, mass mailings, newsletters and surveys.
- A workshop on "Parliamentary Procedures" was held on May 14, 2005 for all board members. The workshop focused on other tools that the board can use besides their regular monthly meetings such as public forums. Parliamentary procedure according to Roberts Rules of order relating to presiding, minutes, the previous question and motions were included in the workshop. Our staff also entertained very thoughtful questions by our board members.

Public Awareness - As part of its function as a City agency, administrative staff worked closely with Olelo and producers in the development of listing neighborhood board meetings on public cablevision to broaden public awareness about the board system.

Web Site – Our active web site requires regular updates by staff to maintain the abundance of Neighborhood Commission information. The web site includes individual board web sites with agendas and minutes going back through 2001, as well as boundary maps for each board and board photos. Agendas and minutes for the Neighborhood Commission are also included as well as commissioner and board member directories, calendars of monthly board meetings, office staff and Mayor's representatives contact information and their board assignments. The Revised Neighborhood Plan, including proposed revisions, links to the Neighborhood Board Discussion sites, and election results for the elections of 2001, 2003, and 2005 can also be found on this site. Our NCO newsletter Ho'ike Lono is also posted on the web along with answers to Frequently Asked Questions, pictures of various events. In an effort to improve our access as well as cut costs, this web site includes a link to sign up for automatic e-mail of agendas and/or minutes for boards and the Commission.

Communication - In an average month throughout FY 2005, extensive communication-related services provided by staff allowed our neighborhood boards and the Neighborhood Commission to reach over 5,800 residents and households, including govern-

ment officials and organizations. Circulation of a monthly calendar of events, agendas and minutes continues to be a valuable outreach mechanism to routinely publicize activities of Oahu's neighborhood boards and the commission in a timely manner.

Additional services involved the production and distribution of newsletters, surveys, flyers, posters, brochures, and certificates; dissemination of information and publicity press releases; publication of legal notices; and writing related correspondence and technical reports.

Board surveys were distributed to identify neighborhood needs and to elicit neighborhood opinions and served as tools to guide boards in setting priorities and recommendations. Survey results were subsequently communicated to neighborhood residents and, as appropriate, transmitted to proper officials and other government departments and agencies.

Total Communication materials processed:

Newsletters/Surveys	8
Videotaped Board meetings	131
Monthly Calendar of Events	12
Certificates, invitations, programs, flyers.....	143

NEIGHBORHOOD BOARDS

All 444 board members are volunteers and serve as advisory groups to the City Council, the City Administration and to departments, agencies and public officials of the state and federal governments. Oahu's neighborhood boards function as an island-wide communication conduit, expanding and facilitating opportunities for community and government interaction. The Revised Neighborhood Plan, developed by the Neighborhood Commission, serves as the legal framework for the neighborhood boards.



Summary of Neighborhood Board Activities

Our neighborhood boards are encouraged to provide their community an opportunity to express its needs and desires in the delivery of government services, including services provided by government, economic development and land use matters. The neighborhood boards were engaged in a variety of activities which included:

1. Having presentations and making recommendations on zoning and variance applications and permits and land use proposals, discussing its impact on the community, including traffic impacts, and submitting recommendations;
2. Reviewing and making recommendations in support of a mass transit project, Bus Rapid Transit, bus routes and other municipal transportation needs, including bikeways, highway beautification projects and communicating traffic and highway concerns;
3. Raising concerns related to parks and making recommendation for park uses to include cultural and heritage uses, tot lots and bark parks and night closures;
4. Reviewing and setting priorities on the Operating Budget and Capital Improvement Projects (CIP) proposed by the City and recommending a list of proposals reflecting the needs of individual neighborhood communities;
5. Reviewing and making recommendations to the Honolulu City Council, Hawaii State Senate and House of Representatives.
6. Participating in various workshops conducted by government agencies.

In their role as neighborhood-based communication channels, boards sponsored forums to hear platforms of political candidates and presentations from the Clean Elections organization. Other boards had special guest presentations on issues and concerns or projects that will affect all of Honolulu. Presentations included Bill 40 (2005) to establish a one half percent General Excise and

Use Tax Surcharge for Transportation, Bus Rapid Transit, Nimitz contra-flow, bus routes, highway beautification, and traffic calming in several board areas. A plan to eliminate crosswalks across King Street at Punchbowl and Bishop Street was halted due to the intervention of the community residents. Environmental issues such as the City's Curbside Recycling Project, U.S. Army Stryker Brigade, HECO's Kamoku-Pukele 138kv Transmission Line Project, and Sewage Treatment Projects were also part of board agenda during FY 2005.

Community residents brought issues before boards that were more local and impacted quality of their neighborhoods included recreational issues such as the Haiku Stairs project, Koolau Greenbelt, the Heritage Trails System, and use of city parks. Land and zoning issues such as Waikiki re-development, planned housing, and the proposed Kapahulu Safeway. In partnership with HPD, boards also participated in community activities to improve the quality of their neighborhoods such as starting up Neighborhood Watch groups, sign waving with HPD for Community Traffic Awareness Program (CTAP), and involvement with Weed and Seed and Community Policing and Drug Abatement and Awareness programs.

Residents island-wide were able to view the following neighborhood board meetings on television on a delayed basis: Ewa Beach, Hawaii Kai, Kalihi Valley, Kailua, Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale, Manoa, Mililani Mauka/Launani Valley, North Shore, Palolo, Pearl City, Waianae Coast, and Waikiki. Videotaping board meetings through arrangements with Olelo (cable television) continued to be a popular avenue to stimulate public interest.

The neighborhood boards of Aiea, Aliamanu/Salt Lake/Foster Village, Diamond Head, and Downtown used annual newsletters to communicate with their communities while the Waipahu Neighborhood Board communicated through monthly advertisements and the Wahiawa Neighborhood Board conducted a survey in June to assess the concerns of their community.

NEIGHBORHOOD COMMISSION

The Neighborhood Commission was officially established in 1973, after Honolulu voters approved a revision of the Revised City Charter, Article XIV. All nine members are appointed volunteers who serve in staggered five-year terms. Four of the Commission members are appointed by the Mayor, four are appointed by the City Council, and the ninth member is appointed by the Mayor and confirmed by the City Council. One of the Mayor's appointees, and one of the City Council appointees as well as the ninth member of the Commission are required to have served one full term on a neighborhood board.

In addition to developing a Neighborhood Plan, which serves as the legal framework for the neighborhood boards, the commission is responsible for the review and evaluation of the Neighborhood Plan and the neighborhood boards. The City Charter mandates the commission to assist areas of the city, upon request, in the formation and operation of their neighborhoods and neighborhood boards. The commission is required to meet six times within a year to review and evaluate the activities, performance and operations of the neighborhood boards.

Members of the Neighborhood Commission during fiscal year 2004-2005 were as follows:

- **Gawain Rohita (Roy) Wickramaratna, Chair
- * Kalene Sakamoto, Vice-chair
 - Clara Y. Ching (Appointed by former Mayor Jeremy Harris, confirmed by Council)
- * Mike Ellis (replaced Benjamin Gudoy effective April 14, 2005)
- **Edward E. Gall
- **Tom Heinrich
- **Jeanette Nekota
- * Pohai Ryan
- * Benjamin Sanchez
 - *Mayoral appointees*
 - **Council appointees*

Commission Accomplishments

This fiscal year the Commission held eight regular meetings and one special meeting. Commissioners conducted several complaint hearings on neighborhood board operational inconsistencies, improper board meeting procedures and publication notices. Procedural hearings were held by the commission in response to complaints pertaining to alleged neighborhood board procedural inconsistencies. Several complaints were dismissed while other complaints against the Makakilo/Kapolei/Honokai Hale neighborhood board were deferred pending reconsideration to allow the board to receive appropriate training in order-and-decorum and Parliamentary Procedure and communications skills.

The Commission's Neighborhood Plan Committee continued its comprehensive review process of the Revised Neighborhood Plan, 1998 Edition. The Corporation Counsel has completed an initial review to the proposed amendments and is awaiting further review by the Commission's Neighborhood Plan Committee. The Neighborhood Commission plans to finalize and have available a new Neighborhood Plan for public hearings by December 2005.